

Message Text

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CORRECTED COPY (TEXT)

PASS AID

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID BG
SUBJECT: FAMILY PLANNING: PRESIDENT ZIA MAPS CORRECTIVE ACTION

REF: DACCA 3875

SUMMARY: IN A MEETING WITH THE BANGLADESH NATIONAL POPULATION COUNCIL, PRESIDENT ZIA DIRECTED THAT MANAGERS OF FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS TAKE STEPS TO ASSURE THAT FIELD WORKERS KEEP WORKING AND STOP SUBMITTING FALSE REPORTS, DECIDED THAT A PROPOSAL SHOULD BE DEVELOPED TO CONTROL THE EXPORT OF DOCTORS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL, ASKED THAT PARAMEDICS BE USED IN STERILIZATION PROGRAMS ON A TRIAL BASIS AND ANNOUNCED THAT A MEETING OF THE POPULATION COUNCIL, OF WHICH HE IS THE CHAIRMAN, WOULD BE HELD ONCE A MONTH TO FOLLOW PROGRESS IN PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION. AT THE MEETING IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT TWO HUNDRED DOCTORS WERE BEING DEPUTED FROM THE HEALTH DIVISION TO FAMILY PLANNING. I CONCLUDE THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS HEARD WHAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TELLING HIM ABOUT BANGLADESH'S FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM AND HAS TAKEN ACTION IN THE THREE MAJOR AREAS OF WEAKNESS. END SUMMARY.
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1. THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS TO ME ON WHAT WAS BEING DONE ABOUT FAMILY PLANNING IN TWO CONVERSATIONS HAD AN AIR OF UNREALITY, (SEE REFTEL). HE INJECTED SOME GOOD SENSE INTO THE PROGRAM AT THE JULY 4 MEETING OF THE NATIONAL POPULATION COUNCIL AND IN SO DOING INDICATED THAT HE WAS WELL AWARE OF THE PROGRAM'S MAJOR DEF-

CIENCIES.

2. AT THE FIRST COUNCIL MEETING SINCE THE FORMATION OF ZIA'S NEW GOVERNMENT, THE POPULATION SECRETARY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE DURING THE PAST YEAR HAD BEEN WEAK BUT REPORTED THAT BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE WAS NOW IN PLACE AND PERFORMANCE WAS EXPECTED TO IMPROVE. PRESIDENT ZIA RESPONDED THAT HE HAD REPORTS THAT FIELD WORKERS WERE NOT WORKING AND THAT THERE WAS FALSE REPORTING. HE DIRECTED THAT THE PROGRAM MANAGERS CORRECT THESE DEFICIENCIES AND INSURE PROPER USE OF FUNDS.

3. THE MEETING ALSO DISCUSSED THE NEED FOR LAWS AND REGULATIONS TO CONTROL THE EXPORT OF DOCTORS. THE PRESIDENT BROADENED THE DISCUSSION TO INCLUDE ENGINEERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS. IT WAS DECIDED THAT A PROPOSAL WOULD BE DEVELOPED, ONE WHICH PROBABLY WOULD REQUIRE A THREE-TO FIVE-YEAR SERVICE IN BANGLADESH BEFORE A PROFESSIONAL COULD ACCEPT EMPLOYMENT ABROAD.

4. IT WAS ANNOUNCED AT THE MEETING THAT ONE HUNDRED HEALTH DIVISION DOCTORS HAD BEEN DEPUTED TO FULL-TIME FAMILY PLANNING DUTIES FOR AT LEAST A YEAR AND THE DEPUTATION OF A SECOND HUNDRED WAS EXPECTED SOON. TWO HUNDRED NINETEEN STERILIZATION CENTERS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR THE STERILIZATION PROGRAM WHICH WILL

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BEGIN ON JULY 17. AT THE MEETING THE PRESIDENT DECIDED THAT A PLAN SHOULD BE DEVELOPED FOR USING PARAMEDICS TO PERFORM STERILIZATION PROCEDURES, UNDER MEDICAL SUPERVISION, TO BE TRIED ON A LIMITED SCALE FOLLOWED BY AN EVALUATION.

5. FINALLY THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO HOLD A NATIONAL POPULATION COUNCIL MEETING EVERY MONTH TO FOLLOW PROGRESS IN PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.

6. COMMENT: ADEQUATE SUPERVISION OF LOCAL FAMILY PLANNING WORKERS, THE RETENTION IN BANGLADESH OF DOCTORS, AND THE HEALTH DIVISION CONTRIBUTION TO FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS ARE THE THREE MAJOR AREAS OF DEFICIENCY IN THE BANGLADESH POPULATION PROGRAM WHICH AID HAS IDENTIFIED (AND WHICH I MENTIONED TO THE PRESIDENT WHEN I SAW HIM ON JUNE 17). THAT HE HAS DEALT WITH ALL THREE IN WHAT WE ARE TOLD WAS HIS MOST FORCEFUL PRESENTATION THUS FAR TO THE POPULATION COUNCIL, INJECTS REALITY INTO A PROGRAM WHICH WILL REQUIRE HIS FREQUENT ATTENTION IF IT IS TO BE EFFECTIVE. THE PRESIDENT'S PERFORMANCE IS AN ENCOURAGING FIRST STEP TOWARD GETTING AN EFFEC-

TIVE FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM STARTED.
SCHNEIDER

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